



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Civic Center • 500 East Third Street, Suite 200 • Loveland, Colorado 80537
(970) 962-2727 • FAX (970) 962-2903 • TDD (970) 962-2620

www.cityofloveland.org

CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – January 11, 2017

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. Third St., Loveland, CO 80537

Commissioners Present: Gale Bernhardt, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Nathan Thompson, Jean Whittaker, Rick Brent (via teleconference), Kerri Rollins (via teleconference).

Commissioners Absent: Andy Hawbaker, Bill Zawacki, Leah Johnson (Interim City Council Liaison).

Staff Present: Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg.

The public meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Approval of October 12, 2016 Meeting Minutes: Gale Bernhardt made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Darren Pape seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Approval of November 9, 2016 Meeting Minutes: Jean Whittaker made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Jim Roode seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment: None.

City Council Liaison Report. Leah Johnson has been appointed Interim City Council Liaison to the Open Lands Advisory Commission, until the April 11 election to fill the vacant Ward III seat.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. Kerri reported on the following OLAB items: 1) the year-long 20th anniversary celebration wrapped up with tours and the successful passport program; 2) the Land Trust Alliance annual conference is in Denver and will include a tour of Malchow Farm; 3) county staff will participate in a joint tour to look at possible trail connections from Prairie Ridge to Coyote Ridge/Rimrock OS, with Loveland and Ft Collins staff; 4) staff is looking into installing a webcam at the Devil's Backbone OS parking lot, similar to Horsetooth Mtn. Ross asked about next steps and followup on the brainstorming sessions on working farms. Kerri noted that the information will be used for Malchow Farm management planning. Larimer County is forging relationships with CSU Cooperative Extension and the Building Farmers and Ranchers program through Thompson School District.

Discussion/Action:

1. Larimer Co. OLAB Representation. Kerri Rollins provided the 1995 and 2014 ballot language regarding representation on the Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board. The 1995 language states that OLAB will include an elected official or appointee from Ft Collins, Loveland, Berthoud and Estes Pk. The 2014 language, which goes into effect in 2019, gives the Board of County Commissioners authority to appoint OLAB members, based on "geographic representation substantially in proportion to population and sales tax generation." Marilyn Hilgenberg has been appointed temporary liaison to OLAB for Loveland. The commission was in favor of staff representation on OLAB.

2. Election of Officers. Jim Roode nominated Ross Livingston as 2017 Chair of the Open Lands Advisory Commission. Jean Whittaker seconded the motion and the commission voted unanimously in favor. The election of Vice Chair was postponed until February when more members may be present.

3. Boards & Commissions Summit and 2016 OLAC Accomplishments and 2017 Goals.

Jean Whittaker and Jim Roode volunteered to represent OLAC at the annual B&C Summit on March 9 and present a short 2016 update on Open Lands with maps and photos and highlighting the outcomes of conservation, connectivity, funding sources, and awards/recognition. The commission concurred with the following 2016 accomplishments and 2017 goals proposed by staff for the summit program:

2016 Accomplishments

- 1) Completed quick-win projects and opened five areas for public access.
- 2) Acquisition of five properties (360 acres) for Open Lands purposes.
- 3) Developed conceptual plans for Sunset Vista and Namaqua Skyline natural areas.
- 4) Increased public outreach with a variety of educational programs, stewardship projects, trail host opportunities, nature activities & guided walks promoting a different site each month.

2017 Goals

- 1) Complete trails and trail connections to open new areas for public access.
- 2) Complete management plans for Big Thompson River Corridor, Sunset Vista, Prairie Ridge, and Namaqua Skyline natural areas.
- 3) Secure land and easements to complete missing Recreation Trail System connections.
- 4) Complete regional Front Range North trail connection; begin construction of Long View Trail.
- 5) Preserve priority Open Land parcels by fee simple or conservation easements.
- 6) Maximize public benefit from the open space sales tax, capital expansion fees & general funds.
- 7) Continue to increase public outreach, environmental programming, and volunteer opportunities.

Reports/Correspondence:

4. Property Acquisition Updates.

- The Namaqua West property is still under contract. An adverse possession and prescriptive easement claim was filed by a neighbor on the parcel north of the river. A survey will be completed so the remainder of the property can be purchased separately. Both sides of the river are valuable to acquire due to river frontage, historical significance, habitat values, contiguity, and trail connections.
- Boise Ave. property acquisitions are still in process, with boundary line adjustments to acquire the riverfront portions and trail connections. Staff is also working with the Waste Water Treatment Plant on access easements through their property where the corridor narrows.
- Staff is drafting a lease agreement for Sweetheart City Winery's use of a portion of the Wild Property, under the terms discussed previously. CO Parks & Wildlife approved the plan with the exception that wildlife damage can't be claimed for compensation, if electric fencing is used.

5. Open Lands Projects Report.

- River's Edge Natural Area – Construction of the new parking area is complete, with striping, signage and trail connections to be finished in the spring and opening planned at that time.
- GOCO Inspire Grant – Staff has been working on the Project Outdoors plan with partners, the Youth Advisory Council, Thompson School District staff, and the consultant. A Program Providers Retreat held in December was attended by 32 local environmental education providers representing 19 different organizations. Innovative ideas for partnerships and collaboration were suggested for possible inclusion in the plan. The public kickoff meeting for the Loveland project will be held on January 24 at the Boys & Girls Club. Families, students, and other interested citizens are invited to the open house, to help identify ways to connect youth and families to the outdoors. Stations will include opportunities for the public to learn about and provide input on potential places, programs, and pathways.

- Environmental Education/Volunteer Program – A representative from the Colorado Health Foundation attended a site visit in December, including a staff presentation, tour of River’s Edge, and active participation by several enthusiastic volunteers. Grant awards will be announced this winter. PEEPs programs will continue year-round on third Thursdays, making use of library space during the winter. Winter bird walks will be re-evaluated after low attendance at the Dec. 3 guided walk.
- Property Naming – Ryan’s Gulch, E. 1st Street – The public naming process for these two new properties acquired in 2016 will include outreach via social media, web announcements, e-notification, and a media release. Proposed names will be presented to the commission for review at a future meeting. The Namaqua Skyline property has also been proposed to be referred to as Skyline Natural Area, to avoid confusion with Namaqua Natural Area, Namaqua Park and the new Namaqua West acquisition.

4. Trails Update.

- Trail Segment 10b – Namaqua to West US 34 underpass – The contract has been approved for JAGS construction and notice to proceed will be issued on November 7. All easements are now complete. The bridge from Viestenz-Smith Park will be used for the GLIC ditch crossing. The schedule is still tracking for the trail to open in the spring of 2017.
- Front Range Trail – Final construction plans were sent to Larimer County on November 3. Clearances for environmental are in progress and CDOT will complete their reviews and approve the project over the winter. The project is behind schedule due to issues with stormwater at the trail crossing at Trilby in Fort Collins. Advertising for bids is scheduled for March 2017. Construction should start in May and be completed in late August 2017.
- Long View Corridor Trail – Staff completed review of 30% plans and sent responses to the consultant. CDOT review of the 30% plans may be delayed due to additional changes proposed by Fort Collins. Loveland traffic staff asked for a wider shoulder adjacent to the proposed left turn lane on 57th Street. The consultant is preparing an updated cost estimate and will include this additional request. The updated schedule puts the project bidding in June 2017 for a construction start in the fall of 2017.
- Trail 10a – Wilson to Namaqua Avenue – Surveying and CAD files were completed in October and conceptual alignment is scheduled for November. Staff will meet with the landowner to discuss the easements and needs for this trail section. Funding has been appropriated in the 2017 budget for design and construction in 2017.
- Grant awards – A \$600,000 CDOT Transportation Alternative Program grant was awarded for design and construction of the Namaqua Trail Underpass at the crossing of Namaqua Avenue where trail segments 10a and 10b join. The project has also been recommended by GOCO staff for the remaining design/engineering costs and awards will be announced in December.
- Wilson Bridge and Taft/Wilson Trail – The project was bid in September and RMC Consultants was awarded the contract, with notice to proceed anticipated for the end of November, pending the approval of the FEMA scope changes and clearance for environmental work. The trail will be closed from Wilson to Taft for the duration of construction until April 2017. Stormwater staff will manage this project for the restoration of the bridge, trail and stormwater improvements.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.